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SUBJECT: NOVEMBER 15 MFA PRESS BRIEFING: IRAN, U.S.-CHINA
ECONOMIC AND SECURITY REVIEW, AFGHANISTAN

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¶1. Key points at the November 15 MFA Press Briefing:

-- Foreign Minister Yang in Teheran urged Iran to "show flexibility and keep positive contact" with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the European Union (EU).

-- China has seen the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review and noted its "extensive contents." China does not undermine the economies of other countries and in fact cooperates with other countries in a "fair way." China and the United States have a "fundamental common interest in sound long-term cooperation" on trade.

-- High-level exchanges with Afghanistan will include "non-traditional security areas."

-- MFA is not aware of the UK Olympic Minister's claims that international news sites are blocked in China for "technical reasons," but is willing to discuss them with her.

-- VISITS: French President Nicolas Sarkozy will visit China from November 25-27. Mexican Foreign Minister Patricia Espinosa will visit China from November 21-24.

FM Yang Visit to Iran

¶2. Asked for a readout on Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi's visit to Iran, MFA Spokesman Liu Jianchao said at the regular press briefing on November 15 that Yang met with Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki, and chief nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili. China's friendship with Iran has a long history. China believes Iran has the right to use nuclear energy for civilian purposes and appreciates that Iran has said it will not develop nuclear weapons. China urges Iran to continue working with the IAEA.

China supports a peaceful resolution of the nuclear issue through diplomatic channels and the IAEA. Yang added that Iran should "show flexibility and keep positive contact" with the EU and other partners. Liu said China supports non-proliferation and Iran has reiterated to China that it too supports that goal. Iran and the United States should communicate country-to-country based on the principles of mutual respect and "equivalent principles."

U.S.-China Economic and Security Review

¶3. The MFA has seen the Congressional panel's recent

U.S.-China Economic and Security Review report and notes that its contents are extensive. Liu said China does not undermine the economies of other countries and in fact cooperates with other countries in a "fair way." As for trade disputes, China and the United States have a "fundamental common interest in sound long-term cooperation." Discussions should be conducted on an equal basis.

Regrets Over Dalai Lama Visit to Japan

¶ 14. Expressing China's regret over the Dalai Lama's visit to Japan, Liu said China opposes any country's providing a venue for the Dalai Lama to espouse his separatist ways. China does not criticize the spiritual philosophy or the world view of the Dalai Lama. However, China does not approve of the Dalai Lama's stance against the principle of China's unity or his support for Tibet's independence. China stresses that the Dalai Lama has long been involved in separatist activities.

Chinese Sailors on Cosco Busan

¶ 15. Alluding to the oil spill by San Francisco's Bay Bridge, Liu said there is no Chinese relationship to the Cosco Busan ship or company. The oil spill was an "unfortunate incident" and China hopes that it will be "quickly resolved" and that the oil spill's environmental impact will be limited. The MFA understands that there were Chinese nationals aboard the ship and the Chinese Consulate in San Francisco has been in touch with the relevant United States authorities regarding their status.

China Supports Afghanistan

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¶ 16. China supports the efforts of the Afghanistan government to promote stability in the region. China takes an active part in the economic reconstruction of Afghanistan. Afghanistan President Karzai has called China "a good neighbor." China believes there is consensus between both sides to continue high-level exchanges between government officials, the two countries' militaries, and ordinary people. China hopes to deepen cooperation in trade, agriculture, public health, and "non-traditional security areas."

UK Olympic Minister Claims Internet Blockage

¶ 17. Noting United Kingdom Minister for Olympics Tessa Jowell's remarks during her recent visit to China that some international news sites are being blocked for technical reasons, a reporter asked why, given China's ability to send a spacecraft to the moon, was it so difficult for the Chinese to repair such "technical difficulties." Liu answered that he had not heard Jowell's comments, but that Internet regulations have been discussed previously at MFA briefings. He added that the relevant authorities would be willing to discuss the matter with the Minister.

East China Sea Consultative Conference

¶ 18. China reiterated its interest in promoting cooperation and in safeguarding the stability of the East China Sea. Liu said China hoped Japan would meet China halfway as both are key countries in the region. China welcomes Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda to visit as soon as possible. High-level visits are extremely important in the improvement of bilateral relationships.

Wang Qingqian

¶9. In response to a question, Liu said competent authorities are handling the case of Wang Qingqian, a PLA Colonel who recently received a suspended death sentence for espionage, per Chinese law.

Upcoming Visits

¶10. VISITS: French President Nicolas Sarkozy will visit China from November 25-27. Trade between the two countries from January through July of 2007 increased by 29 percent. The visit will consolidate China's "comprehensive and strategic" relationship with France.

¶11. Mexican Foreign Minister Patricia Espinosa will visit China from November 21-24. The spokesman noted that both China and Mexico are large countries within the developing world and have had a strong 35-year relationship. The visit will deepen mutual trust in the strategic relationship and will cover exchanges of technology, culture, energy, and tourism.

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